

Appl. No.: 09/849,096
Amdt. Dated: 12/29/2003
Off. Act. Dated: 08/29/2003

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments and discussion presented herein.

1. Information Disclosure Statement.

The Applicant notes that an information disclosure statement was filed electronically on July 9, 2003, prior to the date on which this Office Action mailed. Due to the closeness of the dates, however, it appears that the information disclosure statement was not considered. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests consideration of the information disclosure statement and an indication that the references were considered with the Notice of Allowability.

2. Allowance of Claims 31-33, 37-43, and 47-50.

The Applicant notes with appreciation allowance of Claims 31-33, 37-43, and 47-50.

3. Rejection of Claims 34-36, 44-46 and 51-64.

The Applicant notes the provisional rejection of Claims 34-36, 44-46 and 51-64 under 35 U.S.C. §101 based on copending Application No. 09/813,446, as well as the rejection of Claims 51-64 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) in view of Kunio et al.

In order to expedite prosecution, the Applicant has canceled Claims 34-36, 44-46 and 51-64. Such cancellation is without prejudice to filing a continuation application with claims directed to the subject matter of those claims and is without disclaimer of the subject matter thereof.

4. Related Applications and Patents.

To assist the Examiner with coordination of examination of this application with other pending applications, and to ensure that there are no unknown patents or applications relating to the subject matter hereof, the Applicant notes the other pending applications and issued patents this portfolio as follows:

- (a) S/N 09/813,446 (filed 03/20/01)
- (b) S/N 09/928,237 (filed 08/10/01)

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- (c) S/N 10/293,897 (filed 11/12/02)
- (d) S/N 10/293,949 (filed 11/12/02)
- (e) U.S. No. 6,097,859 (issued 08/01/00)
- (f) U.S. No. 6,289,145 (issued 09/11/01)
- (g) U.S. No. 6,327,398 (issued 12/04/01)
- (h) U.S. No. 6,374,008 (issued 04/16/02)
- (i) U.S. No. 6,389,190 (issued 05/14/02)

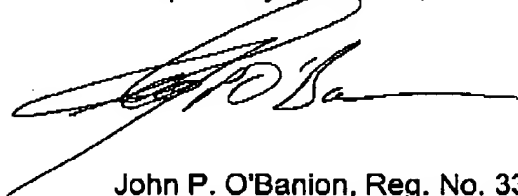
5. Conclusion.

In view of the above, each of the presently pending claims in this application is believed to be in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the outstanding rejection of the claims and to pass this application to issue.

The Applicant also respectfully requests a telephone interview with the Examiner in the event that there are questions regarding this response, or if the next action on the merits is not an allowance of all pending claims.

Date: 12/29/03

Respectfully submitted,



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